Real Impact.
AWARDS
2019

Research making a difference

The Real Impact Showcase Book tells the stories of impact commitment

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Impact is the provable effects of research in the real world. It is the changes we can see (demonstrate, measure, capture), beyond academia (in society, economy, environment), which happen because of our research (caused by or contributed to).

Real Impact Awards 2019

Researchers are focusing more and more of their efforts on projects that make a difference in the real world. This is sorely needed as countries look to tackle priority issues such as the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. At Emerald, we support research that makes a positive and tangible impact. In 2018, we bolstered our commitment to research impact by signing our Real Impact Manifesto and launching the Real Impact Awards. A year later, we also presented our *Change Ready Report*, looking at global attitudes to research impact.

Our awards and other initiatives offer support and recognition to researchers who go above and beyond to make a difference. More broadly, they call attention to the impact debate and the need for new measures. These moves have been welcomed by the research community, and we are particularly delighted at the response to our Real Impact Awards 2019, which received more than 100 high quality entries from researchers and institutions around the world.

The aim of the awards is to raise the profile of individuals, teams and institutions that have placed real impact at the top of their agendas. Beyond this, the awards recognise innovative approaches to impact, celebrate interdisciplinary research, bridge the gap between research and practice and tell real impact success stories of those driving the debate. The 2019 awards were divided into three impact categories: Driving the Impact Agenda, Mobilising Research into Action, and Developing a Focus on Lifecycle Approaches to Impact. Entries were judged by the Emerald Impact Advisory Board, who assessed the submissions based on the type of impact that the nominee committed to achieving.

Here, we present our *Real Impact Showcase Book 2019*, celebrating the award winners and finalists who are bringing about positive change in the real world. The book tells the stories of researchers who have committed to impact and are on a journey to make a significant difference to our communities, societies, cities and world at large. We applaud them for their outstanding contributions to the research community and beyond.

Recognising efforts to establish or embed impact within a research environment, to innovate existing practice, or to drive impact culture.

Driving the Impact Agenda

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Winners

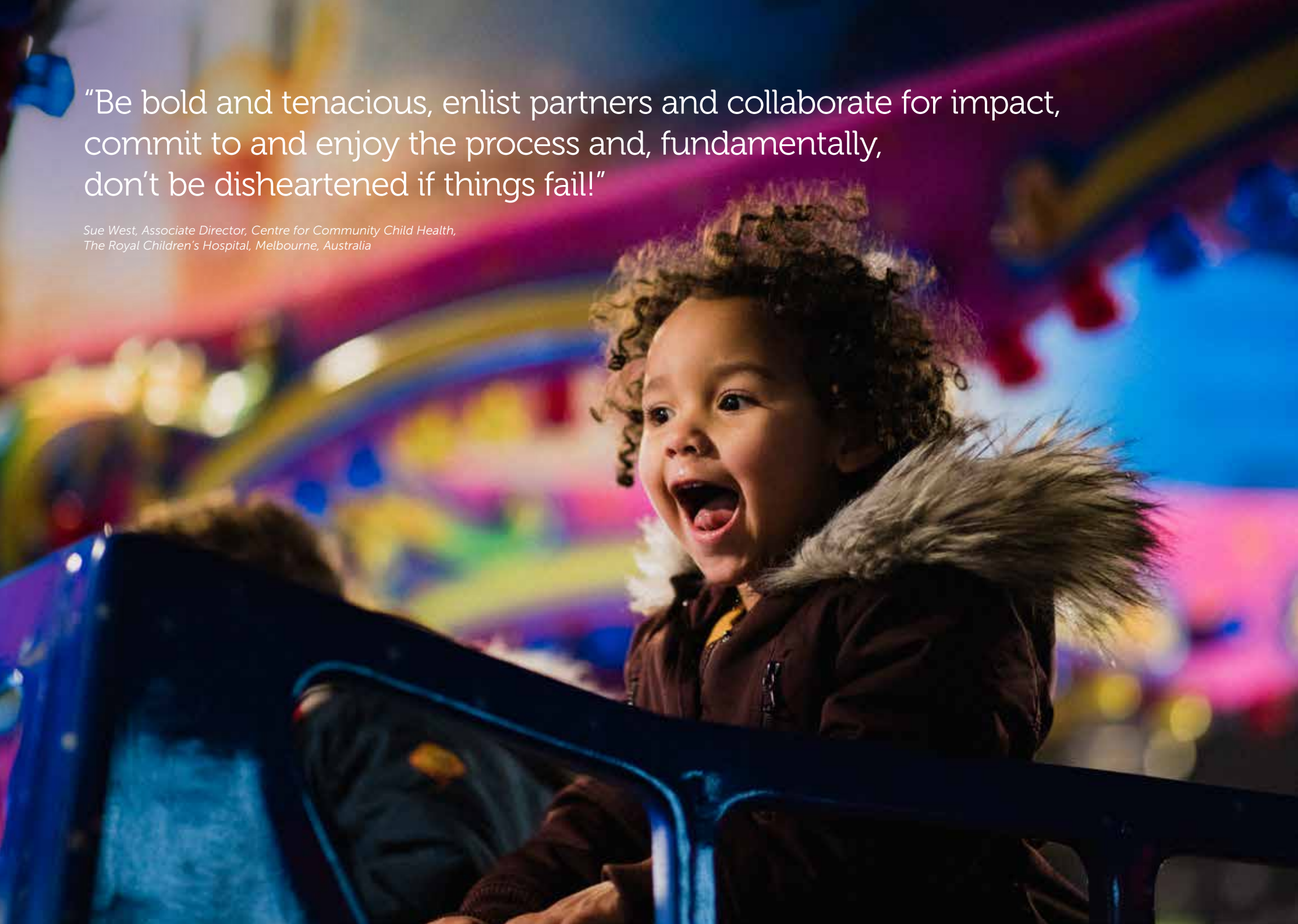
The Knowledge Translation Team at the
Centre for Community Child Health, Melbourne

Sue West

Ken Knight

Vikki Leone

Melanie Barwick



"Be bold and tenacious, enlist partners and collaborate for impact, commit to and enjoy the process and, fundamentally, don't be disheartened if things fail!"

Sue West, Associate Director, Centre for Community Child Health, The Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne, Australia

Fostering an impact culture

The Knowledge Translation Team at the Centre for Community Child Health knew that to improve child health and wellbeing they would need to build capacity for research impact. In 2016, they established the Melbourne Children's Knowledge Translation and Research Impact Project, an ongoing programme of organisational change to improve research impact that has won them a Real Impact Award in the category of 'Driving the Impact Agenda'.

Health research can take many years to influence policy or practice. In fact, an estimated 85 per cent of the US$200 billion global investment in biomedical research is wasted through a failure to translate into real-world contexts. Often the difficulty is that researchers are ill equipped to plan, measure and report the impact of their research findings. These realities led the Knowledge Translation (KT) Team at the Centre for Community Child Health to establish the Melbourne Children's Knowledge Translation and Research Impact Project.

The KT team sits within the Centre for Community Child Health, a department of The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne and a research group of the Murdoch Children's Research Institute. The group, with more than 15 years' experience in KT and research impact, were well-placed to build a culture at the Centre that values, rewards and embeds research impact.

Before the team took further action to foster KT and research impact, they sought to fully understand their context. They engaged knowledge translation and research impact experts, as well as campus leaders and staff in a mixed-methods consultation study to understand their experiences and ideas. They discovered several barriers to impact and areas where capacity building was needed, these included stakeholder engagement and know-how to develop, implement and evaluate a KT and research impact plan.

A unique initiative

Based on their findings, review of existing research and guidance from experts in the field, in 2017, the team began the development of a multi-faceted programme to include:

- A campus community of practice to enable networking, sharing of good and innovative practice and to foster collaboration
- A partnership of clinician-researchers to mentor, fund and facilitate KT, implementation and research impact planning and activities
- A training programme/events to build understanding and skills in KT and research impact
- Support to compile impact case studies in medical research funding applications
- Tools and resources to support impact planning and evaluation
- Ongoing research and evaluation of the programme

The team's commitment to impact is evident throughout their approach and is based on genuine collaboration across stakeholders, mutual trust and a shared commitment to improving child health. "We use our translation, impact and implementation expertise to help parents, communities and other decision makers understand and apply the best evidence to promote children's health, development and wellbeing," explains Centre Associate Director, Sue West, on behalf of the team. "This programme of work has enabled us to take our approach much more across the campus, and work with different researchers, clinicians, students and operational staff."

Reflecting on the success of the programme, Ms West encourages other researchers to commit to impact: "Be bold and tenacious, enlist partners and collaborate for impact, commit to and enjoy the process and, fundamentally, don't be disheartened if things fail!," she concludes.

"A very well articulated case showing a clear and well thought through methodology designed to achieve a range of quality impacts. The project has clearly delivered a wide range of clear and meaningful outcomes for Melbourne."

Judging panel

"I am passionate about providing support to researchers through commercial and pro bono activities, ensuring knowledge for all regardless of circumstance"

Dr Tamika Heiden, Head Inspirer and Founder, Research Impact Academy, Australia

Changing the game

Dr Tamika Heiden sought to discover the true meaning of 'making a difference' and wanted to go beyond traditional academic boundaries to achieve meaningful change. In 2010, she embraced 'Knowledge Translation', recognising its ability to transcend personal circumstances and transform people's lives. She went on to create Knowledge Translation Australia in 2014, helping researchers around the world to make connections, share knowledge and create impact.

The notion of research becoming a force for good – rather than festering on the shelf – has been an enduring motivation for Dr Tamika Heiden and has earned her a prestigious Emerald Real Impact Award nomination. Through her championing of advocacy and inclusivity she has also pioneered a culture of global, national and domestic knowledge sharing.

A pivotal point on her journey occurred in 2014, when she was inspired to revolutionise knowledge translation (KT) with the ambition to ultimately create a better world. She cemented her commitment by breaching the walls of a single institution and aiming to help a broader global audience through her own ambitious consultancy – Knowledge Translation Australia (now Research Impact Academy).

"When embarking on this project my goals were, and remain, big," explains Dr Heiden. "I am passionate about providing support to researchers through commercial and pro bono activities, ensuring knowledge for all regardless of circumstance. I think it's essential to give something back to the sector via my pro-bono activities in advocacy and education. These activities highlight the commitment I have made to driving the impact agenda on a global scale."

Reaching the summit

In 2015, Dr Heiden's role in advocating for funding changes, to include translation and impact, led to her working with the Department of Health, in New South Wales. This involved incorporating KT plans within their funding schemes and launching support for peer review assessment.

This advocacy role continued when the Australian Government announced the formation of a new research fund – the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF). This initiative is slated to provide over $650 million in research funding per year, making Australia among the largest funders of health and medical research. "After outlining the importance of ensuring a return on investment from MRFF funding by embedding KT, I was called to give evidence at the Senate Committee Enquiry and later cited in the passing of the bill in the Australian Parliament," reflects Dr Heiden.

In 2016, Dr Heiden reached new heights by providing the world's first free and online summit to focus exclusively on research impact. At the time, Dr Heiden had been grappling with the sector's misunderstanding of the relationship between KT and impact, and the many confusing terms used within the impact arena. Her response was to create the Research Impact Summit – a free online vehicle that educates and demystifies the impact universe by tapping into global expertise, sharing research impact experiences in different regions and highlighting impact as more than just assessment.

The conference has not only encouraged international knowledge sharing but delivered a carbon-neutral experience, which has overcome the inconvenience of travel and the challenges of accessibility, particularly for people in impoverished nations. In four years, the summit has reached an audience in excess of 2,000 individuals from 47 countries and is considered the largest research impact conference in the world. Dr Heiden is already looking forward to a record attendance in 2020.

“Work on projects that you believe are meaningful, even if you are not sure of a future publication outlet. Meaningful research will get published. Follow your heart.”

Dr Mark Rosenbaum, Dean, Graham School of Management, Saint Xavier University, United States

Research that matters

The idea that services can transform the human condition has led Dr Mark Rosenbaum to explore how researchers, policy-makers, businesses and public entities can work together to enhance consumer, social and global wellbeing. His transformative services research approach in the context of non-medical cancer care, in particular, has been recognised in the Real Impact Awards category of 'Driving the Impact Agenda'.

Service researchers have traditionally focused on understanding managerially-relevant outcomes, such as revenues and customer retention. Dr Mark Rosenbaum, Dean of the Graham School of Management at Saint Xavier University, takes a deeper and broader approach. Some of his latest projects look at how service researchers can make an impact by improving the lives and experiences of people with cancer.

Dr Rosenbaum's work with a leading cancer resource center in the Chicagoland area led to additional collaborations with service providers involved in cancer care, including Reiki and integrative therapies. These studies reveal how Reiki may provide cancer patients with temporary pain relief, while another project shows that men often respond better to receiving non-medical cancer care in settings that are designed in a manner that appeals to their masculinity.

This research demonstrates how service researchers can work with governmental agencies and practitioners to improve consumer, societal, and even global wellbeing via services, service providers, service design and service systems. "At first glance, these studies may not seem in line with traditional marketing," notes Dr Rosenbaum. "They aren't. Indeed, these studies highlight the transformative service research which is a movement that encourages researchers to engage in investigations that can improve human dignity and the common good via services."

Beyond the textbook

Dr Rosenbaum has seen first-hand the impact a transformative services research approach can have on people lives. He now advocates this method through training programmes, often to healthcare providers or practitioners involved in consumer services, such as retailing, hospitality, or healthcare. "I can speak about customer satisfaction and then turn the discussion to patient satisfaction," explains Dr Rosenbaum. "Most importantly, I can contribute knowledge that is not necessarily found in textbooks and I can explain to students that studying topics such as public health and pre-med aligns with service marketing."

Since making a commitment to impact, Dr Rosenbaum approaches each research project with the end in mind, often thinking about implications that have the potential to transform consumer or societal welfare. He advises other researchers who want to boost the impact of their studies to widen their networks and collaborate with practitioners and government agencies. Above all, he urges researchers to: "Work on projects that you believe are meaningful, even if you are not sure of a future publication outlet. Meaningful research will get published. Follow your heart and publications will follow."

Dr Rosenbaum is delighted to be recognised for his commitment to impact by the Real Impact Awards. "I have dedicated a large part of my career to developing the transformative service research model and this Award reinforces the model's mission – improve consumer welfare via services," he concludes.

"We continue to innovate to improve KT and research impact through training, tools, resources and consultations that have touched over 3,000 people directly"

Dr Melanie Barwick, Course Director for the SickKids' Knowledge Translation Program, Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto, Canada

Building capacity for knowledge translation

Dr Melanie Barwick and her colleagues at the SickKids' Knowledge Translation (KT) Program in Toronto, Canada, have spent the past 15 years providing KT and research impact training, tools, resources and consultations to thousands of people in Canada and worldwide. Their significant contribution to research impact has been acknowledged by the Real Impact Awards in the category of 'Driving the Impact Agenda'.

Canada has been a forerunner of knowledge translation (KT) and research impact for decades. The country's commitment to the dissemination and application of research is commendable and they are making progress in building awareness and capacity in KT planning for impact.

For over 15 years, Dr Melanie Barwick has provided leadership as Course Director for the SickKids' Knowledge Translation Program at the Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto, Canada. Together, the KT Program team has sought to make a difference in this space both within Canada and worldwide. Through various collaborations, Dr Barwick and her colleagues have built capacity for research impact within the Canadian research environment and the health, mental health, and education service sectors. They have also developed high quality and effective practices, resources, tools, and professional development in KT and implementation and led in the development of an impact culture among researchers and community organisations.

Dr Barwick and her team's commitment to impact is evident in the innovativeness and longevity toward building capacity for individuals and organisations. "We were the first to offer professional development in KT in Canada and have helped to shape KT efforts in other countries through our internationally recognised courses and collaborations," she explains. "We continue to innovate to improve KT and research impact through training, tools, resources and consultations that have touched over 3,000 people directly."

Rise in KT efforts

The team's work is guided by their efforts to expand the reach of evidence and its potential to produce benefits in the population. They champion an approach to KT that is intentional, explicit and systematic, and that is informed by needs, KT science, and developmental evaluations of their work. Their dedication to KT that leads to impact is paying off, and at the national level it has spurred an increase in the number of KT practitioners and boosted attention to KT in a range of organisations, sectors and disciplines. "This work continues to be very rewarding," explains Dr Barwick. "Shaping individual practices in KT, among researchers, clinical educators, and KT professionals, watching organisations build capacity for KT by developing their own programmes in alignment with their goals, and seeing others succeed is the ultimate testament to our efforts."

Dr Barwick is delighted to have contributed to the development of KT skills in planning and practice at the individual and organisational levels. She encourages researchers and organisations to increase impact by being intentional, explicit, and systematic in KT planning, delivery, and evaluation – the precursors to impact. "They should provide facilitative leadership to enable innovation and execution of KT efforts, assess needs among knowledge users, innovate and adapt," she adds.

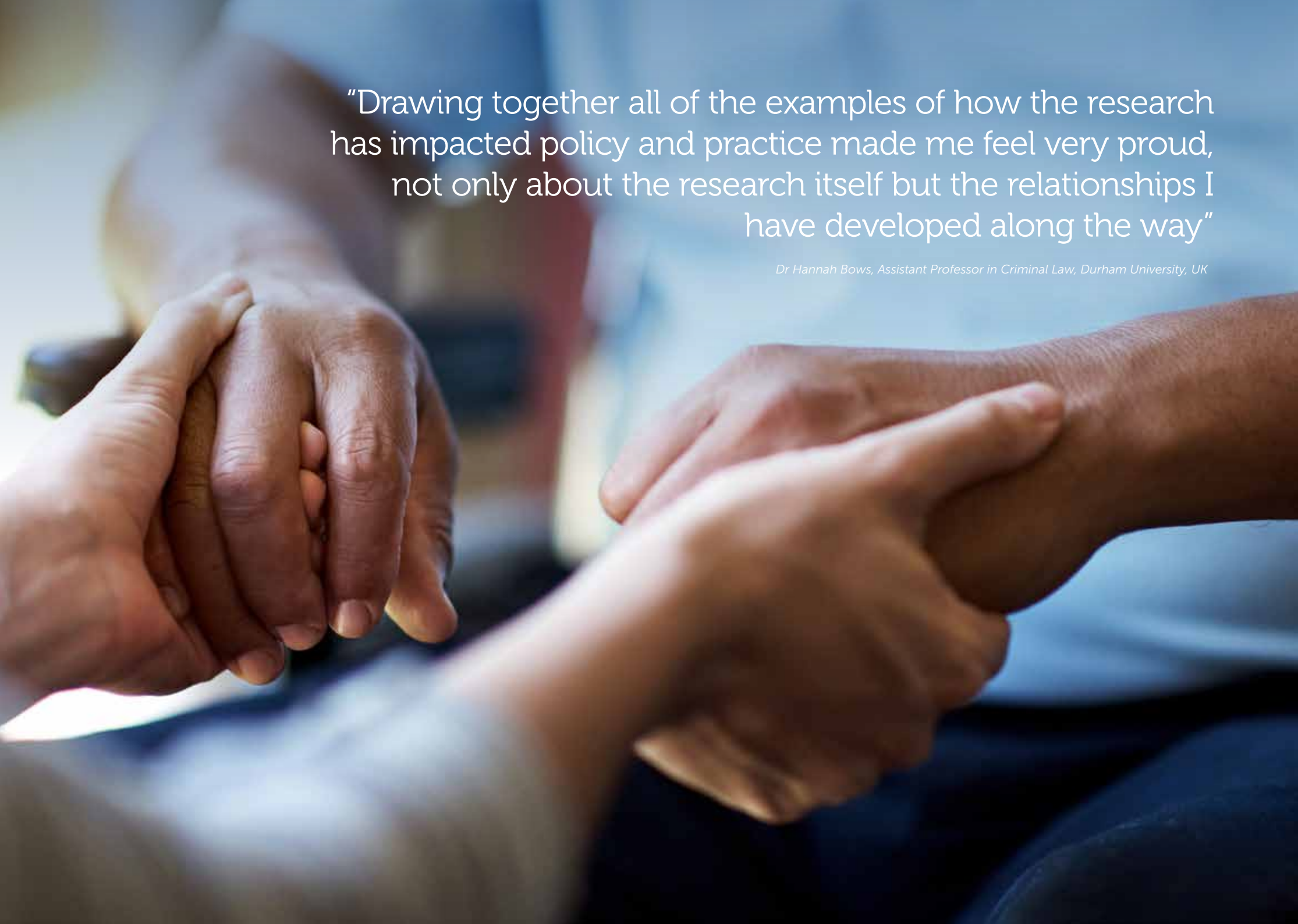
Celebrating efforts to connect meaningfully with non-academic partners, to drive research into practice and generate real change.

Mobilising Research into Action

Real Impact.
AWARDS
2019

Winner

Dr Hannah Bows, Assistant Professor in Criminal Law,
Durham University, UK



"Drawing together all of the examples of how the research has impacted policy and practice made me feel very proud, not only about the research itself but the relationships I have developed along the way"

Dr Hannah Bows, Assistant Professor in Criminal Law, Durham University, UK

Victim support for older people

An overriding goal to make a difference to the lives of older people who have been victims of abuse has won Dr Hannah Bows, Assistant Professor in Criminal Law, Durham University, UK, a Real Impact Award in the category of 'Mobilising Research into Action'. Her research has made an outstanding contribution to the field and has gone on to produce tangible benefits to society. It has influenced British policy, professional standards and guidelines, improved victim support services, and raised awareness about sexual violence against older women.

Dr Hannah Bows, Assistant Professor in Criminal Law, Durham University, UK, has an impact-focused approach to research that is truly making a difference. Her admirable commitment to real-world impact at scale is why she is a worthy winner of the Real Impact Award category for 'Mobilising Research into Action'.

Between 2012 and 2018, Dr Bows conducted research into crimes against older people, focusing on sexual offences and homicide. Impact was embedded in the projects from the beginning and incorporated policy makers, professionals and the general public. It also involved significant inter- and multi-disciplinary partnerships and co-production with statutory and non-statutory services. Her commitment to impact resulted in significant developments in both policy and victim services.

Initiating change

At the policy level, Dr Bows has been working with authorities such as Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, the Crown Prosecution Service, the Welsh Commissioner for Older People and the Scottish Parliament Justice Committee. Notably, her research influenced the permanent uplift of the age-cap from 59 to 74 in the Office for National Statistics (ONS), annual Crime Survey for England and Wales – a move that will establish a baseline understanding of abuses against older people.

Her work has opened new streams of funding for research projects and training centred on older victims of abuse. Comic Relief, for example, is funding projects for older women experiencing domestic/sexual violence. While the Home Office is funding training for independent sexual violence and domestic violence advocates on violence against older women and their support needs.

On the ground, Dr Bows efforts to raise awareness and encourage a joined up approach among organisations is making a difference to victims, with many more now accessing support services.

Icing on the cake

Dr Bows is thrilled that her research is making a real impact. She finds it particularly rewarding to observe how policy makers and practitioners make use of her work. "Drawing together all of the examples of how the research has impacted policy and practice made me feel very proud, not only about the research itself but the relationships I have developed along the way," she explains. "To be recognised through this award is the icing on the cake."

Looking to inspire other researchers, Dr Bows advocates the importance of building relationships with stakeholders. "Reach out to people," she says. "I have picked up the phone or sent speculative emails to key people on many occasions, telling them about what I am doing and, most importantly, why I am doing it and how I think it could be useful to them – I have built many relationships this way and had lots of opportunities as a result."

"An impressive entry that clearly showcased the significant impact the research has had outside of the academy, including influencing policy change."

Judging panel

"The Health and Wellbeing Academy is generating new knowledge, creating clinical interventions that improve wellbeing and, pivotally, helping our NHS partners to create healthcare professionals fit for the future."

Julia Pridmore, Director of the College of Human and Health Sciences' Health and Wellbeing Academy, Swansea University, UK

The Health and Wellbeing Team from left to right are: Zoe Fisher, Julia Pridmore, Dean Snipe, Cerys Davies, Emma Oliver, Ioan Humphreys, Craig Toutt.

Swansea strategy serves shifting society

Throughout Wales people are languishing on NHS waiting lists. Four years ago, the Health and Wellbeing Academy opened on the campus of Swansea University, with the aim of providing health services for communities who cannot easily access them. The initiative has now successfully treated thousands of patients, as well as yielding several key partnerships and creating a new design for healthcare services.

The emergence of the Health and Wellbeing Academy (HWA) at Swansea University has been a compelling response to stagnating NHS waiting lists and – uniquely – it is staffed by students, academics and clinicians. It is an ambitious concept which delivers healthcare and support services that accelerate treatment, significantly reduce delivery times and transform lives.

Being recognised as an Emerald Real Impact Award Finalist acknowledges the HWA's ability to leverage pioneering research from the College of Human and Health Sciences and – through strong relationships with health, business and third sector communities – unroll innovative models of care and treatment. In addition, all profit from the HWA is ploughed back into research and education, ensuring constantly improved offerings to patients, staff and students.

Julia Pridmore, Director of the College of Human and Health Sciences' Health and Wellbeing Academy at Swansea University, is in no doubt about the growing influence of HWA. She explains: "Through our services, such as osteopathy, post-bereavement care, midwifery support, brain injury rehabilitation and diagnostics in the areas of cardiology and respiratory physiology, the HWA is generating new knowledge, creating clinical interventions that improve wellbeing and, pivotally, helping our NHS partners to create healthcare professionals fit for the future."

Since 2016, the HWA's key strength has been the ability to bring together key collaborative partners from academia, business, the third sector and healthcare, providing multiple benefits to communities in South West Wales.

Different perspectives in the healthcare ecosystem

As part of the wider project, Dr Andrew Kemp, Swansea University's Associate Professor in Psychology, and Dr Zoe Fisher, a clinical academic at Swansea Bay University, developed an innovative positive psychotherapy intervention, in partnership with clinicians from the local health board. The HWA is delivering this intervention to people living with acquired brain injury and – following further stages of development – it is also being delivered as a positive psychology module for students at Swansea University. This method is tackling the increasing mental distress among the university populous and such agility has become a defining aspect of the HWA model.

The ability of the HWA to offer such services – in the heart of the community and at no cost – allows the public to interface with health services at their convenience, while also flagging up symptoms earlier than would be expected, potentially saving lives in the process.

The HWA's game-changing methods are having an influence on the broader political landscape. "Our theoretical foundations are contributing to significant redesign of healthcare services," adds Mrs Pridmore. "The HWA team recently supported the opening of Emilia Clarke's SameYou charity, including the organisation of a 100-person flash mob to the Welsh Government, seeking more resources and support for those dealing with the consequences of acquired brain injury, characterised as the hidden disability."

The HWA team have clearly proved that they are evolving as practitioners of the future, creating a new template for the modern healthcare ecosystem, and championing patient choice.

“Our commitment to impact has made us consider more carefully how history and heritage can genuinely be for the benefit of participants”

Melanie Tebbutt, Professor of History,
Manchester Metropolitan University, UK

Heritage through the eyes of youth

A community engagement heritage project designed to reach working-class young men in their teens has been recognised by the Real Impact Awards in the category of 'Mobilising Research into Action'. The Passions of Youth Project team at Manchester Metropolitan University, UK, made a commitment to impact that led to greater confidence among participants and local clubs, as well as initiatives to combat knife crime and improve rail safety.

Working class young people are too often stigmatised and viewed within negative contexts. The Passions of Youth project, led by Melanie Tebbutt, Professor of History at Manchester Metropolitan University, set out to use heritage and history to challenge narrow perceptions of boys and young men in their teens and develop their potential.

Participants from Manchester and Salford were invited to explore the history and heritage of their favourite leisure activities through archival research, storytelling, drama, film-making and sharing their findings with local communities. They worked with historians, curators, archivists and creative practitioners trained in youth work to tell the histories of their leisure passions from their own perspectives and interests, in the form of digital resources and their own films.

The team's commitment to impact helped break down cultural and educational barriers and develop participants' confidence and skills, leading to new learning and opportunities. Local organisations also grew in confidence – the Moston Lads' Club in north Manchester, for example, went on to become involved in initiatives on knife crime and railway safety.

Due to the success of the project, its participatory models have been adapted by other funded projects and partnerships, academia, the voluntary sector and schools. They were also profiled on visitmanchester.com and have featured as a case study on the National Archives' website as an exemplar of Higher Education projects using archives for engaging with the wider community.

A new way of thinking

Having impact at the forefront of the project significantly changed the team's perspectives and approach to research. They found themselves more aware of their responsibilities to participants and their communities and had greater respect for different kinds of knowledge and expertise in communities and community organisations. These new viewpoints helped them manage unexpected challenges and become more accepting of risk, and in turn this led to unexpected learning and outcomes. "Our commitment to impact has made us consider more carefully how history and heritage can genuinely be for the benefit of participants," explains Professor Tebbutt. "And how projects like these need to incorporate their views and aspirations, rather than just serving as a vehicle for our own academic research."

The team advise others engaged in participatory research to achieve greater impact by adopting a flexible and responsive approach to their work. They should embed participants' voices in project appraisal and cut back on ambitions in areas that are less fruitful. It is also important to consider the legacy of a project and implement responsible exit strategies. "If your engagement awakens a particular interest or appetite for activity, ensure there are ways of continuing these interests or needs, whether through the partners with whom you work or by signposting to opportunities elsewhere," adds Professor Tebbutt.

"We can all make a difference. We have different knowledge, skills and specialisms and that's exactly what achieving impact needs. The future of impact from research is teamwork"

Alison Wray, Research Professor in Language and Communication, School of English, Communication and Philosophy, Cardiff University, UK

Improving dementia communication

The deep-seated challenges of communication between people living with dementia and their families and carers can be distressing. Professor Alison Wray, an expert in language and communication, has taken a fresh approach to understanding dementia communication that has led to new insights with practical applications. It is her commitment to improving the lives of people with dementia and their carers that has been recognised by the Real Impact Awards in the category of 'Mobilising Research Into Action'.

Approaches to dementia communication are often theoretical, relying on intuition and common sense. While they can be valuable, Professor Alison Wray at Cardiff University knew that to make a significant impact on the wellbeing of people with dementia and their carers, she needed to uncover the deeper, underlying dynamics of communication in the dementia context. From the outset she was determined to produce findings that could be translated into practical steps.

Professor Wray's commitment to impact led to a series of collaborations that have taken her innovative model of how communication works to families and carers. The model shows how small changes caused by dementia can have far-reaching effects on the communication patterns of both the person with dementia and the unimpaired other person. One of her collaborations was with the animator David Hallangen, who has created two animated films from scripts she has written (Wray 2017b; 2018), with a third film due for release in early 2020. They are all voiced by Sir Tony Robinson, and together the first two have been viewed over 13,000 times on YouTube.

Professor Wray admits that it can often be a struggle to see how theoretical research can make a practical difference. However, the subject of dementia led her to continually examine how her findings could be useful. "Over time, having impact as a lens for my work significantly changed my perspective," she says. In her new book, *The Dynamics of Dementia Communication*, due for publication in March 2020, the final chapters examine issues of direct concern to carers and family and offer a range of practical take-home messages.

Teamwork key to impact

Another collaboration, with Six Degrees Social Enterprise in Salford, UK, has very directly translated her work into impact. Six Degrees runs EmPoWereD Conversations, workshops for dementia carers that draw directly on Professor Wray's ideas, making them accessible and useable. "This kind of teamwork is ideal" she explains. "It is through the mediation of expert trainers that my ideas can be most effectively translated into what will work best for clients."

Indeed, Professor Wray believes that collaboration is often the secret to making an impact. In her previous role as Director of Research at the School of English, Communication & Philosophy, Cardiff University, she came to recognise the power of bringing together individuals with different research approaches. "My message is that we can all make a difference," says Professor Wray. "We have different knowledge, skills and specialisms and that's exactly what achieving impact needs. The future of impact from research is teamwork."

The most rewarding part of pursuing impact for Professor Wray is seeing the tangible difference research can make to people's lives. A dementia community advisor in New Zealand, for example, commented how the animated films shown to family carers had helped "change their style of communication for the better, resulting in less stress, more love, and a better quality of life for both the carer and the person with dementia". Another beneficiary was the daughter of a woman with dementia, who participated in the EmPoWereD Conversations course. She noted: "I felt like I was drowning with Mum, now I feel like we are swimming side by side".

"A significant proportion of my time and efforts have always been focused on impact and the activities that ensure impact happens"

Professor Jessica Woodhams, Director of the Centre for Applied Psychology, University of Birmingham, UK

Real-world positive change

For more than 15 years, Professor Jessica Woodhams, Director of the Centre for Applied Psychology, University of Birmingham, UK, has sought out and created opportunities to engage in research around solving violent crimes, such as rape and serious sexual offenses. She has worked with police, government and other criminal justice partners around the world to co-develop research projects and put findings into action – influencing policy and national debate. Her commitment to deliver real-world positive change has been recognised by the Real Impact Awards in the category of 'Mobilising Research into Action'.

Professor Jessica Woodhams, Director of the Centre for Applied Psychology, University of Birmingham, UK, is an expert in crime linkage, a technique that links a series of crimes to specific offenders. Her work on solving violent crimes, such as rape and serious sexual offenses, furthers justice by helping the police prioritise and build stronger case evidence.

During her research career, Professor Woodhams has informed the creation of new legal precedents. Her research has influenced changes to legislation in countries outside the UK to support the practice of crime linkage (Belgium), prompted investment in crime linkage capability in multiple countries (Belgium, Sweden and the UK), and informed new policing practice in the UK and New Zealand.

Professor Woodhams impact-focused approach to research has led her to establish academic-practitioner working groups and international collaborative networks of academics and practitioners, including the Crime Linkage International NetworK (C-LINK) – all helping to drive real-world impacts. She also trains future leaders and early career researchers on translating research into impact.

Impact takes time and effort

Whether she is creating a research project, training researchers or making connections, the goal of impact is the main driver for all of Professor Woodhams' activities. She admits that being committed to impact can mean less time for traditional academic activities, such as writing up journal articles. However, she believes that impact activities such as creating opportunities for co-creation and knowledge exchange, as well as the formation and maintenance of networks and relationships, are an essential part of furthering positive change.

Professor Woodhams celebrates the move by universities and other organisations to place more and more value on impact activities. This support has helped her pursue impact and become recognised as a leader in translating excellent research into practice. "A significant proportion of my time and efforts have always been focused on impact and the activities that ensure impact happens," she says. "I think what has changed over time is that this has become a recognised core part of my role and so I am explicitly being given the time to pursue those activities and also the financial support to do so."

Over the years, Professor Woodhams has learnt that research impact should never be seen as a 'bolt-on' to traditional research. Making a difference requires time and effort – it relies on making the right connections, and proper research planning and design, with end-users involved from the beginning. "If you want to make the leap (and I'd definitely recommend it!) it can be hard to know where to start," says Professor Woodhams. "You need to find people within the end-user organisations who 'get' research and want to improve the way they are already doing things. However you make these connections – this is a fundamental first step to ensuring the impact you achieve will have real-world value."

Highlighting efforts to connect impact activities, people and strategies along the lifetime of a research project, embedding impact from inception to completion and beyond.

Developing a Focus on Lifecycle Approaches to Impact

Real Impact.
AWARDS
2019

Winner

Natalia Kucirkova, Professor of Early Childhood Education and Development at the University of Stavanger, Norway, and Senior Research Fellow at the University College London, UK

"I am delighted that Emerald rewards impactful research and recognises the vital role that research plays in making a difference to individual lives"

Natalia Kucirkova, Professor of Early Childhood Education and Development at the University of Stavanger, Norway, and Senior Research Fellow at the University College London, UK

Our Story

Professor Natalia Kucirkova's dedication to the development of educational resources that directly impact children's lives has won her a Real Impact Award in the category of 'Developing a Focus on Lifecycle Approaches to Impact'. Her headline projects include the development of an app that enables children to author their own digital books and a suite of online resources that support teachers in introducing digital books to their classrooms.

Research shows that the design of children's e-books is largely inadequate, based on outdated models of teaching that add little value to children's education. Professor Natalia Kucirkova of the University of Stavanger, Norway, and University College London, UK, is addressing this issue through several initiatives aimed at influencing designers and publishers to rethink the quality of the e-books they produce.

Professor Kucirkova places emphasis on collective e-book production, with the establishment of courses for teachers, such as the national course run in partnership with the National Literacy Trust in the UK, freely available resources supporting e-book production[1] and the 'Our Story' app for children's own story-making. Sharing research findings with parents/caregivers and the wider public is also an important part of her work and therefore she is active on social media and visible through radio, TV, newspapers and magazines.

The impact of Professor Kucirkova's work is widely acknowledged, and in 2019, she was shortlisted for a Future Stars of Technology Award. Prior to that in 2018, the Erikson Institute identified her as one of 17 influential thought leaders at the intersection of child development and technology. She was also invited to judge the $15 million Global Learning Xprize and Reimagine Education Awards. Meanwhile, in 2014, she won an Open University Engaging Research Award and was shortlisted in the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement Engage Competition.

Transformational versus transactional

Professor Kucirkova's commitment to impact has directed her to think more strategically about involving stakeholders at all stages of the research cycle, from project inception through to design and implementation. This approach allows her to work directly with designers to make sure that research findings are embedded in the design of new e-books. Through collaboration with teachers she can help select e-books that are aligned with effective pedagogy and working with parents she can advise how to incorporate e-books within family routines.

"It is essential that in all areas, researchers' public engagement is not transactional but transformational," explains Professor Kucirkova. "Transformational public engagement empowers a community (however big or small), so that the members of this community can then become agents of change. That is the kind of impact I strive for in my work."

Professor Kucirkova salutes Emerald for awarding commitment to impact and encourages other researchers to plan for impact at the start of every project. "I am delighted that Emerald rewards impactful research and recognises the vital role that research plays in making a difference to individual lives," she adds.

[1] https://www.uclpress.co.uk/products/109473

“This is a really comprehensive impact story that stands out in a variety of ways. It shows really meaningful work in bridging the gap between research and practice and working to embed change through a variety of different mechanisms.”

Judging panel

"The values of inclusion, celebrating diversity, challenging the status quo and promoting social justice are at the heart of everything we do"

Dr Catherine Lee, Deputy Dean for Education at Anglia Ruskin University, UK

Turning the tide

LGBT teachers often shy away from leadership positions to avoid greater scrutiny over their sexual identity. Determined to see change, Dr Catherine Lee challenges traditional heterosexual, white, masculine conceptualisations of school leadership through projects that develop LGBT teachers leadership potential. This exceptional work has led to her recognition in the Real Impact Awards category of 'Developing a Focus on Lifecycle Approaches to Impact'.

Dr Catherine Lee, Deputy Dean for Education at Anglia Ruskin University, is the creator of a research-based programme that is making a difference to the lives of LGBT teachers and the schools and communities they serve. This work was prompted by her experience as an LGBT teacher of 25 years and her research findings that LGBT teachers do not apply for and secure promotion to school leadership roles at the same rate as their heterosexual and cisgendered peers.

Her latest work and fight for LGBT equality and inclusion was recognised in 2019 when she was named one of the Pride Power List's Top 100 most influential LGBT individuals. The same year, a representative from the Department of Education's Leadership and Diversity units praised the Courageous Leaders programme, adding that it would serve as inspiration for the Department and future improvements.

The Courageous Leaders programme encourages LGBT teachers to reflect critically on how gender and sexuality influence behaviour in the school workplace, and to explore what it means to be an authentic leader. The programme itself has been evaluated very positively, with participants writing: "Personal highlights for me include the workshops by Dr Catherine Lee. Catherine was simply inspirational, she has triumphed through incredible adversity towards her diversity and hearing her own story made me very proud to be LGBT+ which sadly I have not often felt".

The programme, now in its fourth year, is based in London and the East of England but participants travel from all around the UK to attend. Teachers are based in the state and independent sectors and range from colleagues in early years through to those in sixth form and further education.

Promotion, Pride Clubs and a book

Challenging convention is rarely straightforward, but Dr Lee's commitment to impact has been fruitful. In fact, 85 per cent of teachers participating in Courageous Leaders have gained promotion to Headteacher or Senior Leader in schools within a year, roles they believed they would not have achieved without the support of the programme. In addition to gaining promotion, Courageous Leaders participants say they feel more confident and are better role models for their students in school. Some teachers in secondary schools have started Pride Clubs for older students, and some in primary schools report being less anxious when confronting issues of sexual identity in the classroom.

Dr Lee's dedication to impact has led to other projects and she has recently been commissioned to edit a book for teachers. For the book, she is supporting alumni of the Courageous Leaders programme to write about the challenges they face as LGBT teachers and their experiences of pursuing and achieving school leadership roles. The book is aimed at LGBT teachers, Headteachers, School Governors and policy makers and will be published in Spring 2020.

The Courageous Leaders programme and Dr Lee's other projects are clearly making a difference to LGBT teachers and their communities. She recommends others on a journey to impact to surround themselves with positive like-minded people, who are clear about the goals and meaning of the work. "The values of inclusion, celebrating diversity, challenging the status quo and promoting social justice are at the heart of everything we do," she adds.

Recognises an innovative project that promotes action towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals, through collaboration of disciplines, methodology and research in order to deliver real world impact.

Interdisciplinary Research Fund Award

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Interdisciplinary Research Fund

Winners

University of Lincoln, UK
Tom Martin, Humanitarian Photographer and Lecturer,
Dr Kaya Davies Hayon, Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Francophone Maghrebi Culture, and Professor Stephanie Hemelryk Donald, Distinguished Professor

University Hassan II of Casablanca, Morocco
Dr Fadma Aït Mous, Assistant Professor of Sociology and Moroccan Researcher

Tom Martin

Dr Kaya Davies Hayon

Prof. Stephanie Hemelryk Donald

Dr Fadma Aït Mous

"We don't have any internal funding opportunities in the current funding environment, so this award is vital in allowing us to do the work."

'Seeing Change: Gender, Ethnicity and Democracy in Morocco' winning project team.
University of Lincoln – Tom Martin, Dr Kaya Davies Hayon, and Professor Stephanie Hemelryk Donald.
University Hassan II of Casablanca, Morocco – Dr Fadma Aït Mous.

Helping Moroccan women overcome barriers to political participation

Winners of the first Emerald Interdisciplinary Research Fund Award will use the £10,000 grant to conduct a project that addresses key challenges in gender equality and political participation in rural Morocco. The team, based in the UK and Morocco, will adopt a creative arts approach to increase young Berber women's political engagement.

For the past two decades, women's rights groups in Morocco have campaigned to increase female political representation. These efforts have resulted in a number of reforms, such as parliamentary quotas, that are helping women gain a stronger political voice. Despite progress, political inequality still remains and is particularly severe within marginalised groups, such as the Berber community. Young Berber women are often poor, illiterate and lacking the support of activist movements which largely focus on helping educated urban women enter the political arena.

A unique initiative to help young Berber women in rural Errachidia overcome obstacles to political participation is to be rolled out by an interdisciplinary group of social sciences scholars, arts researchers and practitioners at the University of Lincoln, UK, and University Hassan II, Morocco, in partnership with Moroccan NGO – Ecole Citoyenne des Etudes Politiques (ECEP). Through participant-led workshops, young Berber women will explore the barriers to political representation and how they would like to be heard. They will use image, sound and text to create narratives on their political insights, concerns and ambitions.

Towards gender equality

The project is aligned to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality and expected to lead to various outputs including an exhibition produced by young Berber women, an evaluative symposium and a co-authored academic publication. A toolkit on Berber women's political participation will also be created and disseminated to help inform policy. The symposium will be attended by researchers, local women, community members, and leaders from Moroccan civil society and governmental organisations, providing pathways to impact at local, regional and national levels.

The University of Lincoln team includes Tom Martin, Humanitarian Photographer and Lecturer, Dr Kaya Davies Hayon, Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Francophone Maghrebi Culture, and Professor Stephanie Hemelryk Donald, Distinguished Professor. The other member of the research group is Dr Fadma Aït Mous, Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University Hassan II of Casablanca, Morocco, and Moroccan researcher.

The project, 'Seeing Change: Gender, Ethnicity and Democracy in Morocco', is made possible thanks to a £10,000 Emerald IDR Award. The entry was chosen from almost 100 submissions from around the globe because of its ambition to bring about real change for a hard-to-reach-group seeking gender equality and political participation.

"We don't have any internal funding opportunities in the current funding environment, so this award is vital in allowing us to do the work," says the team. "The award is focused on impact and this allows us as a team to prioritise that approach, which is exactly what we want to do. We work with young women and girls because we believe that they have a great deal to offer the world and their communities. If anything we do assists them in realising or articulating their potential contributions then we are satisfied."

The IDR Award was launched in 2019 to support an innovative project that brings together disciplines, methodologies and research to deliver real world impact in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

“The team’s partnership with local NGO Ecole Citoyenne des Etudes Politiques (ECEP) suggested the potential for real change resulting from this project but importantly, we felt the fund could make a significant difference to this project, and the dissemination of its findings, helping it to achieve real impact.”

Judging panel

REAL IMPACT AWARDS 2020

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